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NORTHERN MICHIGAN TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE annual meeting of the Northern Michigan Teachers' Association was fortunate in having a greatly increased attendance, and especially, in having the presence of the entire state board of education, together with the president of the State Normal School, Dr. Boone. The spirit and enthusiasm of each session was highly commended by those who are accustomed to attend similar gatherings elsewhere. Each paper showed care and work, and the discussions were prompt, vigorous and to the point.

The programme was made general, that it might be of interest to teachers in all grades of public-school work. This report, however, will touch only upon those points brought out or emphasized which are of interest to teachers in the department of secondary education.

The paper on "Vertical Writing" brought out some points of interest to high-school teachers, and provoked a very helpful discussion of the whole subject of penmanship. In all writing, legibility, rapidity and beauty are cardinal virtues. These results, it was maintained, can be and are secured readily by competent teachers of the subject. No radical ground was taken in favor of either "slant" or "vertical" writing in the discussion. Both were commended. But the very important point was brought out that in the matter of penmanship the physical constitution of the pupil should be given due freedom. Some seem to be physically constituted for vertical writing. Perhaps the "backhand" was nature's call for the vertical system. And out of all of the present discussion of this subject will probably come the conclusion that good writing may be slanting, slightly slanting or vertical. It was agreed that the muscular movement was the best in all cases, and should be taught from the beginning.

The evening programme was in the nature of a banquet. The "People and the Public Schools" was presented from the side of the people by Mr. Sawyer, president of Cadillac's board of education. He believed that the people wanted to see good results in essential things: They want their children taught to read well, spell correctly, write neatly, figure accurately, express themselves with facility orally and in written form; in short to become masters of at least the tools of education. Every teacher gave ready assent to this demand for "practical results." Yet all were glad to have Dr. Boone immediately say, that a man is worth to the world what he can do, to himself what he can enjoy. Education *is* external, but it is also internal. It is something within. Incidentally we must earn a living, but more than this is necessary in living.

State Superintendent Jason E. Hammond is just now visiting the schools in various parts of the state and said that to the "traveler" the ideal teacher was the one who presented a winsome face, erect carriage and a prepossessing manner. She is punctual, well dressed and cheerful. Her influence is an affirmative influence. Her motto is progress, her instruction progressive. The lessons she teaches from books are a small part of the instruction that she gives. She loves the world and does not complain in the presence of the world's most precious inhabitants. Her reproof is encouragement and her restraint is leadership.

The paper read at the Saturday morning session on, "The Relation of the High School to the State," by Superintendent E. F. Gee, was full of interest to every high-school teacher. Mr. Gee thought it proper to consider (1) whether the relation of the high school to the state is as important as the friends of the high school believe to be; (2) what particular sphere the high school should occupy in fulfilling its duty to the state; and (3) some ways in which we as teachers may help the high schools to serve the state most effectively. After briefly reviewing the origin and growth of the high school in Michigan the paper asserted that the pupil in our grammar school may learn the facts of the history of our country, he may see something of the relation of these facts, but not until his mental powers have broadened can he understand their full bearing on our present state; not until then can he begin to comprehend the meaning of the duties that devolve upon him as a member of a state. No one will seriously maintain that the child of thirteen has received from the state sufficient instruction as to his duties and privileges as a citizen. Our high schools therefore must undertake the work of instruction which shall prepare the young for the higher duties and responsibilities of government. Granted that only 10 or 15 per cent. of all the children take advantage of the opportunities offered in the high school, the state owes it to itself to train this number to the best of her ability, for they shall be the leaven which shall tend to transform the whole. The ideal relation between the high school and the state is of a reciprocal nature. The more the state does for the high school, the more the school will do for the state, and this reciprocal action may be carried so far that the character of the school will determine to a large extent the character of the state. What shall the high-school teacher do? Teach the principles which led to the founding of our government and which have guided in erecting and maintaining its superstructure so successfully. Teach these through the lives of our great men. A few lessons from "Honest Abe," well brought out may be worth everything to the boy whose soul is thus kindled into a flame of noble activity when it otherwise might have smoldered in spiritual and intellectual darkness. In the high school should be taught a knowledge of our various institutions of local, state and general government. In addition to the instruction in civic science, the high school owes to the state training

and discipline in those moral virtues which lie at the foundation of good citizenship. It may well be considered a cause for alarm when godless, though highly educated men, come to occupy leading positions in our educational institutions. The high interests of the state require that our education shall include those virtues, which make good men and which impel men to right conduct and right action.

President Grawn then resumed the chair, which had been occupied during the morning by the vice president, Mr. Luther. Every minute until train time was taken up in a splendid discussion of the Purpose and Place of Examinations. Superintendent Blodgett, in leading this discussion, was at his best. He gave no formal paper, but talked the whole question over in a masterly manner. He would avoid the extremes of too many long, formal examinations, and no examination at all. He would not have the teacher assume that cold, sentinellike manner, calculated to freeze the last warm drop of blood in the hearts of the already terror-stricken class; nor would he have the teachers overstrain the pupils' sense of honesty by leaving them alone. Frequent written tests in regular recitation were urged to be followed by a thorough formal examination at the close of a term or semester. With energy and good common sense the discussion was continued by Superintendents Satler, Simmons and Wilson of the state board. Editor Powers, also of the state board, got in the last word. Being an orthodox man, Mr. Powers believed in the wisdom and efficacy of the "day of judgment." He thought it had a mighty and stimulating effect all along, in all the teaching and learning, for both teacher and pupil to know that there was going to be a day of reckoning. And we wanted to add that this day, like that other one, is not set for condemnation, but as a day of approval, when every worthy one may hear the welcome, "Well done."

During the morning the nominating committee, Superintendent Gee, Principal Maxwell, and Principal Horn, reported the following as officers for the ensuing year, which report was adopted:

President, Superintendent C. T. Grawn, Traverse City; Vice President, Superintendent H. T. Blodgett, Ludington; Secretary and Treasurer, Superintendent J. H. Kaye, Cadillac; Member of Executive Committee, Superintendent J. R. Miller, Big Rapids.

The executive committee, consisting of the officers, together with all of the county commissioners in the territory of the association, were made a committee on membership.

The president appointed the following committee on publication for the coming year: Principal C. H. Horn, Superintendent E. L. Luther, Superintendent H. C. Lott.

Adjourned.

C. H. HORN

CADILLAC HIGH SCHOOL